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Letter dated 19 May 2004 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the Quartet statement, which was issued following the meeting of the Quartet Principals — representing the United States of America, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations — at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 4 May 2004 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring this text to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Annex

Quartet statement

New York, 4 May 2004

Representatives of the Quartet — United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Irish Foreign Minister Brian Cowen, United States Secretary of State Colin Powell, High Representative for European Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, and European Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten — met today in New York.

The Quartet reaffirms its commitment to our common vision of two States, Israel and a viable, democratic, sovereign and contiguous Palestine, living side by side in peace and security; and calls on both parties to take steps to fulfil their obligations under the road map as called for in Security Council resolution 1515 (2003) and previous Quartet statements, and to meet the commitments they made at the Red Sea summits in Aqaba and Sharm el-Sheikh. In that context, the Quartet urges the Government of Israel to implement its recent affirmation of its readiness to implement certain obligations under the road map, including dismantling of outposts erected since March 2001 and progress towards a freeze on settlement activity, and urges the Government of Israel to implement those commitments and to fully meet its road map obligations.

The Quartet members reviewed developments since their last meeting in New York on 26 September 2003 and view with great concern the situation in the Middle East. The Quartet condemns the continuing terror attacks on Israel, and calls on the Palestinian Authority to take immediate action against terrorist groups and individuals who plan and execute such attacks. The Quartet members recognize Israel's legitimate right to self-defence in the face of terrorist attacks against its citizens, within the parameters of international humanitarian law, and the Quartet calls on the Government of Israel to exert maximum efforts to avoid civilian casualties. They also call on the Government of Israel to take all possible steps now, consistent with Israel's legitimate security needs, to ease the humanitarian and economic plight of the Palestinian people, including increasing freedom of movement for people and goods both within and from the West Bank and Gaza, removing checkpoints, and other steps to respect the dignity of the Palestinian people and improve their quality of life. Under the road map, the Government of Israel should take no actions undermining trust, including deportations; attacks on civilians; confiscation and/or demolition of Palestinian homes and property, as a punitive measure or to facilitate Israeli construction; destruction of Palestinian institutions and infrastructure; and other measures specified in the Tenet work plan. The Quartet calls for renewed efforts to reach a comprehensive ceasefire as a step towards dismantlement of terrorist capabilities and infrastructure, and renewed progress towards peace through the implementation of the road map.

The Quartet notes the Government of Israel's pledge that the barrier being erected by Israel should be a security rather than a political barrier, and should be temporary rather than permanent. The Quartet continues to note with great concern the actual and proposed route of the barrier, particularly as it results in the confiscation of Palestinian land, cuts off the movement of people and goods, and undermines Palestinians' trust in the road map process as it appears to prejudge the final borders of a future Palestinian State.

The Quartet took positive note of the announced intention of Israeli Prime Minister Sharon to withdraw from all Gaza settlements and parts of the West Bank. The Quartet welcomes and encourages such a step, which should provide a rare moment of opportunity in the search for peace in the Middle East. This initiative, which must bring about a full Israeli withdrawal and complete end of occupation in Gaza, can be a step towards achieving the two-State vision; and has the possibility of restarting progress on the road map. The Quartet further notes that any unilateral initiatives by the Government of Israel should be undertaken in a manner consistent with the road map and the two-State vision that underlies the road map.

The Quartet reaffirms President Bush's call on 24 June 2002 for an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 through a settlement negotiated between the parties. The Quartet also notes that no party should take unilateral actions that seek to predetermine issues that can only be resolved through negotiation and agreement between the two parties. Any final settlement on issues such as borders and refugees must be mutually agreed to by Israelis and Palestinians on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), the terms of reference of the Madrid peace process, the principle of land for peace, previous agreements, and the initiative of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah endorsed by the Beirut Arab League Summit; and be consistent with the road map.

The Quartet and the international community are prepared to intensify their engagement with the Palestinians to restore momentum on the road map, enhance Palestinian humanitarian and economic conditions, build transparent and accountable Palestinian institutions, ensure security and stability in Gaza and the West Bank from which Israel withdraws, prevent all acts of terrorism, and ensure the dismantlement of armed terrorist groups. In furtherance of these goals, the Quartet will take the following steps, with appropriate mechanisms established to monitor progress and performance by all sides:

The Quartet will act on an urgent basis, in conjunction with the World Bank, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, on the basis of a World Bank/Office of the Special Coordinator rapid-assessment study, to ensure that Palestinian humanitarian needs are met, Palestinian infrastructure is restored and developed, and economic activity is reinvigorated. The Quartet welcomes the World Bank-established Trust Fund as an accountable, transparent, and appropriately benchmarked mechanism for receipt of international assistance.

The Quartet is prepared to engage with a responsible and accountable Palestinian leadership, committed to reform and security performance. The Quartet, through an empowered Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Task Force on Palestinian Reform, and in connection with the major donors working through the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee and the Local Aid Coordination Committee, will engage the Palestinians to reinvigorate the reform agenda of the road map, including a well-prepared and appropriately timed electoral process, paying particular attention to areas from which Israel has withdrawn. In this regard, the Quartet members will undertake to oversee and monitor progress on these fronts.

The Quartet will seek to ensure that arrangements are put in place to ensure security for Palestinians and Israelis as well as freedom of movement and greater mobility and access for Palestinians. The Quartet underscores the need for agreed, transparent arrangements with all sides on access, mobility and safety for

international organizations and bilateral donors and their personnel. As Israel withdraws, custody of Israeli-built infrastructure and land evacuated by Israel should be transferred through an appropriate mechanism to a reorganized Palestinian Authority in coordination with representatives of Palestinian civil society, the Quartet, and other representatives of the international community to determine equitable and transparent arrangements for the ultimate disposition of these areas as quickly as possible.

Effective security arrangements continue to be critical to any possibility of progress. In coordination with, and under the auspices of, an oversight committee led by the United States, and in coordination with the empowered Prime Minister and Cabinet, Palestinian security services should be restructured and retrained, consistent with the road map, to provide law and order and security to the Palestinians, to end terror attacks against Israel and Israelis and to dismantle terrorist capabilities and infrastructure. The Quartet welcomes in particular the Government of Egypt's engagement on security issues, including efforts to achieve a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire as a step towards this goal.

The Quartet reaffirms its commitment to a just, comprehensive, and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict based upon resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973); and reminds all parties of the need to take into account long-term consequences of their actions and of the obligation for all parties to make rapid progress towards resumption of a political dialogue. The Quartet will remain engaged with Israelis, Palestinians and all other parties — including through presence of its envoys on the ground — to ensure appropriate follow-up to the steps outlined above. An appropriate coordinating and oversight mechanism under the auspices of the Quartet will be established. The Quartet also calls on all States in the region to exert every effort to promote peace and to combat terrorism, and to prevent terrorist groups from making use of their territory to plan, prepare, or launch terrorist attacks.